PART 3 The Process Overview

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Introduction

3000 This part provides an outline of the PM process and is intended to give an overview of the process that is described, in detail, in the subsequent parts of this guidance.

Organisation

3001 The PM checking process is operated by HEO led teams, of Multi-benefit Review Officers (MRO), arranged geographically. There are separate HEO led Central Technical Group (CTG) and an ESA central checking team based at Benton Park View, Newcastle.

MRO Attendance during a visit

3002 It is anticipated that you will be present within the PSU during the first four weeks of the visiting period, however the number of weeks will vary depending on the method the reviews are undertaken.

Note: cases handed off for the selected period check and categorisation will be completed remotely by an MRO.

Note: team leaders should keep the ECO/PCP/LA informed of the anticipated staffing levels attending the BDC/PC/LA.

PM Review Medium Level Process

3010 Flowchart box numbers relate to process flow chart at Appendix 1

Appendix 1a Process flowchart

Flowchart Box 1

3011 The sample will be produced as outlined in Part 5 of this guide.

3012 - 3019

Flowchart Box 2

3020 The ECO/PCP/LA will be responsible for locating and providing the cases for the technical preview and visit.
3021 The LA will be responsible for obtaining prints from their systems.

3022 - 3029

Flowchart Box 3

3030 The ECO/PCP/LA will ensure that the documents required by you are presented at the commencement of the visit. (See Part 4 of this guide for full details of ECO/PCP/LA Contact good practice)

3031 Where the visit commences remotely the team leader or lead MRO will be responsible for making the necessary arrangements:

• to collect the documents; or
• for the ECO/PCP/LA to forward the documents by secure courier

3032 The lead MRO will be responsible for managing all cases in the sample at the technical preview stage.

3033 The MRO will also retain the PM documents for each case in the sample.

3034 - 3039

Flowchart Box 4

3040 You will confirm whether the case is suitable for a claimant review for common sample cases.

3041 – 3049

Flowchart Box 5

3050 Cases that are not considered appropriate for the sample will be abandoned and replaced (in accordance with the strict guidelines contained in Part 5 of this guide). You will complete FREDA in abandonment/replacement cases and pass the case to a peer checker, for authorisation where appropriate. In certain circumstances the HEO will be required to authorise the abandonment of cases. Part 5 contains full guidance for these exceptional cases.
Where a case is live and in payment during the selected period, but subsequently needs to be abandoned and replaced from the sample before the review can be undertaken, you will consider if the case will be appropriate for an official error only check.

Where the request is agreed, you will authorise the abandonment, noting the details on FREDA. Following the authorisation FREDA will automatically generate the replacement case - it will be the lead MRO’s responsibility to allocate the replacement case.

You will need to consider if an official error only check is appropriate.

Note: where the request is declined you will be informed of the reason by the peer checker.

You will conduct a technical preview on each case, this will include:

- checking for FES/Compliance interest
- identifying evidence required for the official error check
- identifying evidence required in relation to potential claimant error/ fraud
- identifying specified evidence required from the ECO/PCP/LA and notifying via FREDA
- completing relevant parts of database/forms
- identifying potential official errors

You will need to conduct the pre-visit preparation, identify any other changes affecting the review and consider if the case is still suitable for claimant review.
You may still need to consider an official error check if the case is no longer suitable for review. Please see Part 5 for further guidance.

Flowchart Box 9

You will visit the claimant to conduct the review, recording all findings on the FREDA database with a recommended categorisation based on evidence collected at the review.

Note: You may identify that the case should be abandoned and replaced at the review stage, where this occurs authorisation may be required.

Where the case paper is not presented for check, you will, obtain all evidence and verification required for the selected period (e.g. capital, part-time earnings, evidence of identity etc) along with the benefit review form/HB supplementary form (as required) and a signed Statement of Circumstances from the claimant of their circumstances at the time of the selected period up to the date of review.

Flowchart Box 10

On completion of the technical pre-view, review and recommended categorisation of you will be responsible for arranging the hand off where appropriate for the official error and review week check categorisation. The hand off to a second MRO will apply if the case is not being conducted under a Single Officer Review.

Note: This will include cases where you have completed a request for the ECO/PCP/LA to obtain further evidence.

The nature of the hand off will be dependant on your location at the time. The hand off will be:

- face to face where you are at the same location as the second MRO
- via the ECO/PCP where the second MRO is due to arrive at the BC/PC
- via secure courier where the second MRO is conducting their checks remotely
Note: The ECO/PCP/LA must be informed where the cases are sent to a different location.

3102 - 3109

Flowchart Box 11

3110 Following the hand over the receiving MRO will conduct the:

- 100% evidence check
- 100% preview check

3111 - 3119

Flowchart Box 12

3111 Following the hand over the receiving MRO will conduct the:

- official error check
- review week error check

3121 - 3129

Flowchart Box 13

3130 If you identify, at the technical preview, evidence that will be required to conduct the official error check, and this evidence cannot be obtained at the review visit (e.g. missing mortgage sub-files), you will record the details on FREDA and notify the ECO/PCP/LA to obtain the evidence. As the LA’s do not have access to FREDA you will forward a request by e-mail or in person. The ECO/PCP/LA will obtain the evidence as soon as practicable and provide it for you to complete your official error check and case categorisation.

3131 You will only raise a request relating to incomplete issues to the ECO/PCP/LA, at preview, with regards to the following:

- missing case papers
- missing mortgage sub-files
- missing LA prints

3132 The ECO/PCP/LA will immediately forward to you any documents subsequently located.
Flowchart Box 14

3140 You will determine whether sufficient evidence is available to conduct the official error check. Where sufficient evidence is provided you will proceed with the official error check. However where insufficient evidence is provided, you will need to determine who is responsible for providing the evidence which is missing.

Flowchart Box 15 & 16

3150 Where you correctly identify all required evidence at the technical preview, and all the evidence has been provided, any further evidence required will be requested from the ECO/PCP/LA.

Example

The claimant was due to attend a WFI prior to the selected week and there is no evidence on LMS or in the case that the office have conducted (or deferred or waived) the interview.

You will require evidence that this interview has been conducted (or deferred or waived) – as you could not have obtained this evidence from the claimant at the review, you will request that the ECO obtain the information.

3151 The ECO/PCP/LA will return the evidence as soon as practicable but no later than the deadline for incomplete cases, which is 10 weeks from the date the case is left as incomplete. If there is Fraud involvement the deadline will be 10 weeks from the date of the Fraud outcome.

Flowchart Box 17

3160 If you fail to correctly identify all required evidence at the technical preview/review or correctly identify all required evidence but fail to obtain it,
the missing evidence will need to be obtained either by a telephone call to the claimant or in writing. A re-visit will only be conducted as a last resort.

3161 - 3169

**Flowchart Box 18**

3170 You complete the official error and review week check on the appropriate benefit week/fortnight.

3171 - 3179

**Flowchart Box 19**

3180 Whenever a discretionary decision on a case is required (i.e. where there is more than one possible outcome) categorisation will occur following the DM's decision.

3181 You must not predict the outcome of the DM's decision if there is more than one possible result.

3182 Cases that require a discretionary decision will be passed to the DM, via the ECO/PCP/LA. In all cases that are referred for a DM decision you must ensure all evidence, facts and details of relevant legislation/guidance are highlighted for the DM's attention.

*Note: Cases that may be treated as discretionary decisions include deprivation of capital/notional income/Living Together.*

3183 - 3199

**Flowchart Box 21**

3200 You will determine the final categorisation of the case for claimant fraud/claimant error/official error once all action is complete and calculate the amount of any MVE/MVFE.

3201 Once categorisation has taken place you will enter the details onto the FREDA database.

3202 – 3209
Flowchart Box 22

3210 You will consider whether NPV action is required for official error against the Selected Period and for claimant fraud/error against the Review Week for ESA, JSA and SPC.

3211 Where Net Programme Value (NPV) action is appropriate you will refer the case to a Decision Maker for a decision (unless already decided by the DM due to a previous discretionary decision).

Note: in order for the claimant/partner to actually make an alternative claim/application as a result of the change in benefit it is important that the decision is actually made and notification issued to them.

3212 - 3219

Flowchart Box 23

3220 Where potential NPV action is appropriate you will follow the methodology contained in Part 17 to ascertain the NPV.

3221 - 3239

Flowchart Box 24 & 26

3240 Has case been selected for a test check? If yes the case will need to be forwarded to the appropriate Team/MRO who has been designated to undertake the test check.

3241 - 3249

Flowchart Box 25

3250 For HB cases, you will need to consider if there is entitlement to non-passported HB where passported HB ceases.

3251 - 3259

Flowchart Box 27
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3260 PM will provide the ECO/PCP/LA with the result of their findings. If following discussions with the PM operational team, the ECO/PCP/LA disputes the PM findings they will have the option of requesting arbitration on the case.

*Note: full details of the arbitration process can be found at Part 18 of the guide Handoffs-Agreements-Disagreement-Arbitrations.*

3261 - 3269

**Flowchart Box 28**

3270 The ECO/PCP/LA ensures that errors are corrected ensuring the claimant receives their correct entitlement to benefit with any overpayment or underpayments appropriately actioned.

3271 - 3999